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ABSTRACT

Teaching sociology through role playing involves students in acting out roles learned in the socialization process. The content of the game is the simulation of an area of social reality, either simple or complex. Participation in this activity presents students with alternative world views, develops problem solving and behavioral skills, and makes abstract concepts presented in the classroom concrete. Also, role playing provides students with an understanding of social roles and enlivens the subject of sociology. Positive implications for role playing are that it challenges the student to learn and think for himself; it creates a new approach to learning both inside and outside the classroom; and it provides a relaxed atmosphere for the learning process. Negative results may occur if the activity is not integrated into the professor's teaching philosophy or if the classroom becomes an "arena of emotions." Further, students and teachers can both become defensive and the classroom may be chaotic during the role playing process. Guidelines for the selection of simulation games and instructions for preparation for simulation are included. (KC)

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ROLE PLAYING: USES AND ABUSES IN TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

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Teaching in general is an event in which there are a great many varied and complex needs. Students come from a variety of different backgrounds, social classes, experiences, interests and aptitudes. All are there for different purposes, and because of that, all have different wants and needs, many of which, are opposite of one another. Add to this the different social and emotional levels and you have an audience in one sense impossible to please or work together, and in another you have a potential beyond imagination.

Now consider teachers in a similar way. They may or may not be in the same place as that of the majority of their students or of any one student, for that matter. The number of years teaching, their personal milieu at home, divorce, sickness, involvement with colleagues, are all critical factors in determining not only where they are socially but how they perceive themselves as a teacher, and thus, how they relate to their students and others. Their education, what they were told were the central issues of their discipline, determines the content and to a great extent their goals in the interaction called teaching.

The institution, its leadership, its needs, the quarter or semester system, the grading process, community pressures, and promotional procedures all play a part in the process. The individual department's place in the institution also exerts pressures upon its colleagues and students. Finally the general state of the society, the crisis of government, are all determining the process labeled teaching. In an effort to give the process some rational perspective and plan of approach, the

professor seeks goals, methods and a philosophy of teaching.

Teaching in the social sciences, specifically sociology is not any different, except hopefully the social scientist is aware of this process and its complexity. If not we fail to understand what happens in our teaching and why. For the social sciences are concerned with concepts, and the related issues, both of which are abstract. This abstractness needs to be understood from a multifaceted viewpoint. That is from the sociologist's viewpoint any issue, or concept, can be seen from several perspectives, and what one sees depends upon the perspective. Role playing meets this need in a very precise manner, because of the nature of roles, and role playing itself.

Roles: What are They?

What and how we should think of roles is an issue which has not fully been decided upon by our discipline and I am aware that the definitions proposed here do not speak to that issue. However, Ralph Linton (1936) defines roles in terms of "actions that are performed by an individual to validate his occupancy of a position." Daniel R. Miller (1963) also points out that roles have a certain normative effect on social behavior. He states: "The mutual responses of two people can be explained more readily by their shared conceptions of the behavior appropriate to their two roles than by their psychological characteristics or

the unique qualities of the social interaction. In other words, although there are wide variations among the needs, motives, and personality patterns of customers and sales clerks, we can nevertheless predict with a high probability of success that a customer in a supermarket will bring his purchases to the checkout stand and that the clerk will ring up the price of each item on a register, place it in a bag, tell the customer the total shown on the register tape, and accept payment, whereupon the customer will pay the amount requested. The specifics of these two reciprocating roles are set by culture and prevailing custom, and are shared by both sales clerk and customer."[1]

Lungren[2] (1973) points out: "As individuals interact in a social setting, they perform various functions for one another, some functions growing out of biological relationships to others, such as a mother toward her children, and others growing out of the demands of a situation, such as teachers toward their students. Actions involved in carrying out these functions become routinized. Such routines may make for efficiency in accomplishing goals, or may be dictated by the logic of the functional relationship, or by tradition. Individuals who subsequently occupy positions may also learn appropriate role behaviors through imitation, by responding to the expectations of others, or both." And further: "Roles that are attached to certain positions tend to be more or less standardized. The roles that are attached to the position of host and guest are highly prescriptive in the Middle East. In middle-class North America they are less so, but there are nevertheless certain standard forms of

behavior expected of hosts even in this more permissive society. For example, it is customary to greet guests at the door in somewhat neater and more formal attire than one would wear if guests were not expected. The guests' coats and hats will be taken from them and they will be invited into the living room. They will be offered something to drink, and, if they happen to have come near mealtime, they will probably be asked to share the meal. If the guests are unexpected, and there is insufficient food, the host may suggest that they go out to eat. Interruptions and distractions are kept at a minimum. For example, if the host should be called to the telephone during the visit, he will try to make the conversation a short one, or will ask the caller to ring back later.

It is understood, of course, that there are many variations in the way these roles are played, and that some people may wittingly or unwittingly deviate from the prescribed patterns of behavior. A host may, for example, become engaged in a long telephone conversation while his wife attempts to keep a conversation going with the guests. Such behavior on the part of the host is usually considered an affront to guests, although it is good form for guests not to show that they have been affronted.

What we have described, however, is the kind of behavior prescribed for hosts that is displayed by them <u>most</u> of the time. Other kinds of behavior may be consistent with the roles prescribed for a certain position, but may be followed only by a limited number of people.[3] So it is seen that even though there may be wide variations in roles, a core of

expectations still exists, thus we always know to some extent what to expect in our interaction.

This learning process begins at birth. The mother and father as caretakers, are critically involved in the survival of the newly born human animal. No other animal is born quite so totally helpless and needing care so totally. If the child is not picked up upon coming from the womb and carried to the life giving breast it will die, while other animals are able to crawl to the breast. The child is helpless, and must be cared for, totally. In exchange for that service the child learns to please quickly knowing that he/she is susceptible to all and every whim of the caretakers. The caretakers are the child's god. From the child's view they had no beginning. Towering over the child physically, they know all, provide all, and can take away all, even life itself. It is no mistake that we have child abuse laws, and it is no mistake that the child fears his parents. It is within this environment that the child learns to respond to tone, looks, silences, the total language of the body. It is no wonder that the child learns quickly how to behave in each and every specific situation. What is expected and what punishment to expect if he/she doesn't perform in the expected manner.[4]

The expectations learned and the process of learning them is, of course, socialization. Considering the thoroughness of the process by which we become human, that is, learning what is expected in every and all situations in life, it is easy to understand why it is so essential to understand the concept of roles, if we are going to understand human behavior. Thus we are able to understand that if roles are used as a

teaching method we are connecting with a central life experience. We are in a sense at the very center of human experience itself. Simulation, or role playing, develops the ability to problem solve, to be creative, all in an environment of safety. That is, the person is able to try new behavior and not have to deal with the real consequences of that behavior in the "real" world. This then encourages growth intellectually, emotionally and socially, in a safe place. Learning becomes a life experience, and not just what takes place in the classroom.

Another related issue here is that human behavior specifically in the learning context is often a combination of, or one of, conflict, competition and cooperation, and when a society, group, or a person finds themself in one area more than the others, often confusion develops when the area is conflict or competition, this because of what is perceived as negative returns in these areas, both in the interpersonal world, and in the macro perspective of society. Without an understanding of roles one is destined to that confusion and a very narrow worldview. Psychology gives expression in part, to the feelings of confusion, whereas sociology explains the causing process, thus giving the overall perspective and understanding. To give the student this process and understanding seems to the writer a basic requirement for living, and for being a social scientist.

Role playing as a method is capable of providing this understanding, and adding a very practical element to teaching. Application in the life of the student provides a process of making sociology live in the life of

the student. This in turn brings a great many positive implications ranging from student enthusiasm in learning, to the size and growth of departments within the university.

Role Playing and Teaching Sociology

Role playing is simply that form of acting with the script materials already a part of each actor, which were learned in the socialization process. As stated earlier, although none of us would act out any role exactly the same we all have the esssential characteristics of all roles in our society allowing us to role play events in our society.

Clarice Stoll[5] (1970) provides another perspective of role playing when he states: "A simulation (game) assigns students a role with resources for meeting a specified goal according to a set of permitted behaviors or rules. The content of the game is the simulation or representation of some aspect of social reality." Students make decisions, stand responsible for the outcome of the decisions and experience the rewards and frustrations contained in that particular "slice of social life."

Teaching sociology by the use of role playing then is simply simulating an event of society whereby the students act that event out by playing the various roles in that event. It may be very simple or extremely complex, depending on the number of people involved, the number of issues which are determined by the design and purpose of simulation. But in all simulation one issue is always clear, that is, the "relativity

of all data dependent upon one's perspective and experience." In this writer's opinion this is a key issue in teaching sociology by the use of role playing. Since this perspective is seen through all role playing it creates that objectivity needed to view data as an observer. This perspective appears as the class debriefs the simulation, appearing in the various ways in which the same data was seen, by different students, which reinforces objectivity throughout the whole class.

S. I. Hawakawa[6] elaborates on this concept by stating that all incoming data is to be seen as tentative hypothesis. That is, all data must be thought about in terms of other possibilities, other possible evidence. Some questions which may be asked are "What about my behavior may have caused the person with which I'm interacting to behave in the manner in which they did?" "To what extent are values involved in the data being presented or observed?" Since we are aware that data which conflicts with our self-image and which we fear might be true, causes us to be defensive, and lose our objectivity, we need to know to what extent it may be happening. Role playing provides a method and a process for answering these and other related questions by showing alternative world-views. In seeing alternatives it shows the difference between inferences about an event and the actual event. For instance, if we see a car weaving, all we have seen is a car weaving. But all too often we believe the inference which one made about the data is what the actual data is. "It's a drunk!", could be a very common inference, but may or may not be correct. The brakes could have gone out, the car may not even have a driver and on and on. Role playing teaches this perspective clearly because it

is the very basis of the concept of roles.

This relativity is seen in even the most simple of role playing. An example of this is seen in which role playing is used to simulate a family discussion concerning an issue in family living. An example found in Balridge's instructor's manual (1975) is a family discussion around among other issues smoking marijuana. Even in this simple role play a great many issues all showing this perspective materialize. To mention a few:

1. parental and child behavior
2. alternative roles for parents and children
3. various worldviews
4. factors of class, time, culture
5. the communication process

The simplicity or complexity of role playing is directly related to the design of the simulation. A simulation can be structured to cover a few concepts in depth or to cover a variety of concepts in general. The process of design has at least ten steps. They are:[7]

1. Define problem area to be simulated--start with your interest.
2. Define the objective and scope of simulation--write statements that define clearly the purpose and scope of the game.
3. Define physical location and time frame of simulation (where and how long a time are you simulating).
4. Define people and organizations involved. Roles, eg., consumer, children, parent, voter.

5. Define the motives and purposes of the players.
   What are goals
   resources — What can they do
   action options
   constraints — What can't they do

6. Define resources: (eg. money, ownership of goods and services, influence over the players)

7. Determine the transactions to be simulated and the decision rules to be followed (eg. buying, selling, negotiating, etc.).
   --sequence of what each player will do.
   --playing time cycles - how long?

8. Rules: Manner in which things <u>can</u> be done.
   Things or constraints which <u>cannot</u> be done.
   Keep them simple.

9. Formulate <u>evaluation method</u>. A simple scoring--for the "winner".
   But to really get something out of a simulation, it is important to look at what the outcomes really are and to then determine their value.

10. Determine game prototype. Board game — game materials
    Role play — chance factors

Another way of looking at design is that of Samuel A. Livingston.[8]

1. Identify the roles of participants in real-life situation and of the players in your game.

2. Determine each player's goals and choose a measure of success for each player.

3. Identify the resources available to each player, which he can use to influence the outcome in his favor.

4. Determine the interactions between players in the game.

5. Determine the sequence of events.

6. Determine the external factors.

7. Identify the physical factors affecting the outcome of the situation and organize them into a playing board (if one is to be used).

Though the approaches to design are different they both express the necessity to think through the actual life event if one is going to try to simulate that event. The correlation of a well thought out simulation by the professor, and students understanding of the concept, how well the simulation runs is extremely close.

The more complex the design the more clarity, especially in the mind of the professor, is needed. Also at this point the issue of debriefing, both the kind and quality, becomes essential. The use of video taping, or taking notes can be extremely helpful to jog memories and maintain clarity. The process of learning how to design and then modify the simulations is useful because it helps to understand and predict the outcome of the simulation. This in turn brings understanding of the concepts themselves, since designing shows one indirectly the way the related parts and issues of the concept are inter-related. This again brings clarity by fitting all the pieces together to see the whole.

Two other related issues in teaching sociology which role playing meets head on is that of the abstractness of social concepts, and the fact that those concepts are often in conflict with the socialization process. In our discipline we are faced with the task of bringing people to believe and understand the very opposite of which they have been socialized.

How does one explain the abstract? Love, chocolate, ethnocentrism, power, to name a few. Role playing by its very nature of looking at issues from various points of view is capable of creating the concrete.

And at the same time role playing provides a way to show people how common sense can be and often is wrong. Ethnocentrism is a good example. Here the sociologist is trying to show the student that there is a variety of perspectives in doing, being and believing, and that they all need to be considered objectively, while the student has been taught all his/her life that there is only one way, the way of their culture, and that way is the best.

In trying to explain the concept of ethnocentrism, one might play a game which involves elements of the following.

1. choosing groups on the basis of friendships or some other assumed likeness in the class
2. give time for the group to explain how they feel alike and why (giving time for some sense of ingroupness to develop)
3. have them then perform an activity of competition with other groups
4. in that same activity ask for group evaluative statements on one another's behavior again creating the outgroup and in-group
5. at the conclusion and in the debriefing discuss those feelings and behavior about the evaluations and behavior

What comes from this is a <u>form</u> of ethnocentrism, the feeling that one's way of doing and being is better than another's. The application to cultural ethnocentrism and the related concepts of in-groups and outgroups among others can then be discussed. The result is understanding of the abstract concept and its related symbols in a multifaceted way which meets the needs of abstractness by being able to consider an idea from several different perspectives of related experience. In addition

relating the text and other outside sources at this juncture shows the inter-connection of a variety of other concepts while at the same time making the central concept even clearer.

Again the very nature of roles and the process of role playing helps in this difficult process. For since roles are multifaceted and since we all have the common experience with roles it's possible to interact, to play the game and to have the feeling that goes with the concept, and in the discussion of how the game was played to gain insight from that very experience from the different points of view as represented by the class. Thus the symbols which we have used to label our behavior have meaning because of experiencing them and then reflecting on that experience, from various perspectives. This brings the possibility of understanding, and where there is confusion provides a variety of points of view, from many peers, instead of just one teacher. The questioner has a whole class to help clarify his/her confusion. Since the data of the simulation is a part of the confused questioner's experience, it can be used to explain also, giving a common basis for interaction. Resulting in taking something abstract and explaining it very concretely, by the behavior of the participants. That is ethnocentrism as a concept can thus be <u>seen</u> in behavior, and then understood.

The ability to interpret is essential. That is to listen to another human being's point of view, and when it is confused to explain that confusion. This requires the professor to possess ability in the art of communication. To be able to logically and creatively find contradictions and explain those contradictions by applying the very concept which is in

the process of being explained. It is here that the concept is often seen with the insight that all teachers yearn to share with their students.

Throughout the debriefing process it is necessary for the professor to blend advance preparation and the direction which the class has taken, together in a unified whole. It's good to have some questions on hand if the class seems to need them. Fransecky[9] (1971) gives the following examples:

1. Who are the winning teams?
2. What were their strategies?
3. How did the scoring system compare with real world rewards?
4. What elements of the process or institution were missing?
5. What rules should be changed?
6. Can you apply the winning strategy to real-life?
7. What are the implications of the game, the strategies and the real world problems?
8. How do you feel about what happened to you in the game?
9. How similar do you think your feelings are to those of people in the real life situation?

Often the blending of advance preparation by the professor with the class's direction is an art in itself. Too much direction often does not allow the students participation in an independent manner. Too little, and the task may become unclear, and the class confused. The blending of structure and self-reliance though difficult, improves with practice, and when it happens is extremely rewarding for both the class and the professor.

Positive Implications of Role Playing

So we see role playing provides a method of meeting the teaching needs of those sciences which concepts and issues are abstract, and difficult to teach to others. It provides a way of handling and coping with problems that seem too complex to understand. It provides a variety of uses and skill building opportunities for all involved. It directly challenges the student to begin to think and learn for himself. It challenges the dependency of the student upon the teacher both emotionally and intellectually. Finally it challenges the roles of authority found in the traditional classroom and encourages equality and personal growth.

It creates a new approach to learning both in and out of the classroom. For example, city planners, government officials, and community organizers use simulations to try to predict and understand the future needs and issues of society and community. Teachers who have the ability to self design simulation can use it to teach creatively trying to find solutions to teaching issues (i.e., role issues, authority, learning application) as well as teaching their discipline in a way which is self-fulfilling and a growth process in itself.

It can be seen then that role playing provides a variety of potential uses in teaching social sciences. By its very approach it provides a relaxed casual atmosphere, in which many authorities, for example, Carl Rogers, believe to be essential in learning for any lasting effect to take place.[10] It provides an informal atmosphere allowing both roles of the student and teacher greater variety and flexibility. It helps to

bring teachers and students together as persons rather than within a prescribed role. Instead of the teacher being the only authority in the room students are able to be seen as equals with valid perceptions and observations of their own. The joy they receive in making applications and receiving insights give them not only social confidence but a confidence in their skills as an observer and indirectly encourages them by success to apply that ability and become even better. In this process everyone becomes both a learner and teacher working together. This brings about a genuinely human atmosphere in the classroom which encourages learning creatively. This has often been confused as a touchy-feely atmosphere and perhaps for some that may be what happens. But a truly human atmosphere is one where the human being is seen with the utmost of importance, where human needs of separateness, relatedness, independence and freedom, and a growing self and social awareness are able to develop. This process encourages a feeling of responsibility for the class goals by everyone involved. This is expressed in class attendance, class discussion, questioning and even in grades. Throughout the course the time spent in preparation and in involvement is expressed by the quality of the class discussion in search of truth, both in and out of the classroom. Students thus learn a process which carries on after the specific course ends. Having become self reliant, they continue seeking truth and applying the new found freedom and ability.

Abuses and Negative Implications of Role Playing

A primary consideration in using the method of role playing is how comfortable the person is with himself/herself and with the humanistic approach. This is important because especially in teaching, to bring about the kind of atmosphere we have discussed, if it is to be genuine it must be believed genuinely. If the teacher is uncomfortable with openness, chaos, casualness, letting students know them as a person and not just within the role of teacher then this method of teaching would be difficult to use. It would also be difficult to understand since it would be juxtaposed to percepts of their worldview. What often happens is such a person uses role playing as a technique. Depending upon the person and the kind of role playing used it can be effective to a degree, if it fits the person's approach somewhat, even though uncomfortably, if thought out to its logical end. The abuse lies in the lack of coordination and integration of one's teaching philosophy. This may lead to a "Bits and Pieces" approach to learning which often leads to student confusion and even at times the lack of professional growth on the part of the teacher.

The skills needed for this method are personal and humanistic skills, such as:

1. self-awareness (especially of defensiveness)
2. ability to interpret and think spontaneously
3. trust in others ability to learn for themselves
4. an ability to blend structure out of chaos

These of course are philosophical.

There are of course ways to get around this issue. For instance, some professors may use one game and have another skilled in simulation come and run it for him/her. Many media centers in universities provide this service. It is a matter of whether the professor is using simulation for a very specific purpose or whether it's a part of his/her whole teaching philsophy. Between these two extremes there are, of course, a variety of combinations. The essential point is that the professor has thought through his/her goals and integrated them with the method of role playing.

This points to the myth that all can use simulation with the same level of effectiveness, therefore judging the concept of role playing in a stereotype manner. Role playing is often judged by one simulation, one kind of simulation, or by one person who explained the method. Whatever was perceived is what role playing then is. This may lead to several criticisms about all role playing. Barbara G. Olmo sees those criticisms as "fun and games," "time-consuming," and "distortions of truth." She answers them by discussing them from various viewpoints. That is, there is an element of truth in each of these criticisms, but the criticisms need to be seen in context. If simulation is used as a way not to prepare and is not well thought out then it just as any other method can become "fun and games." But motivation and high levels of student involvement are two considerations in using simulations. And when one sees enthusiasm in students who were passive and uninterested in more traditional teaching techniques, fun is usually a by-product. Which raises the question "Can learning be fun?" If not, why?

The issue of time needs to be considered in the overall class planning process. How does the teacher structure time and subject matter to "cover the material?" If one uses a role playing simulation to cover an issue which could be covered in one day and the simulation takes three days then yes, simulation is time consuming. But if we could prove that investing three days in a simulation resulted in greater student involvement, more effective problem-solving, and a higher degree of transfer on an issue which needs three days to cover completely then this would be a sound return on the teacher's investment. Really a great expenditure of time is never mandatory; as one becomes familiar with designs, one can alter simulations and "do it yourself," in your own way to fit your own time schedule.

As for the charge that simulations distort the truth, consider Olmo's definitions, along with others presented earlier, "simulation is obtaining the essence of something, but without all aspects of reality." Another "....the creation of realistic experiences to be played out by participants in order to provide them with life-like problem-solving experiences." Truth, as Olmo points out, is always in the eye of the beholder.

So much for the abuse of the concept. There are issues which the method of role playing itself raises. First, is the confusion which is inherent in this method, confusion in the classroom, confusion of student-teacher roles and confusion within the student himself because of the non-traditional approach. Role playing can be a very chaotic, and noisy method of teaching, in some cases because of the games structure, which

require movement and enthusiasm. This at times disturbs other classrooms. It also may bother the student who needs clarity, in a traditional way, from the professor. Often this is the older student who sees simulation as "fun and games." As mentioned before it may be just that, "fun and games," or it may be because simulation requires the involvement of the student in a non-traditional way, and moves the professor from the chair of authority, and thus the authority needs of the student are not being met.

Because of what teaching is and what is expected in the traditional teacher's role, this may result in anger, alienation, and may lead to conflict between the professor and student. If this is allowed to continue this conflict can be very harmful. It can be an opportunity for a genuine learning experience for both the teacher and student, but requires a great amount of understanding, expertise in inter-personal communication.

Other problems around roles develop because in role playing new perceptions of the student and teacher develop. This of course is again a matter of degree, based upon the whole context. Defensiveness can become a real factor as the roles begin to change. Some students because of hostility carried over from other perceived oppressive teaching styles, attack when the professor lowers the role of authority. In a way, it's a way of testing by the student. "Does he really mean what he's saying?" "Am I really free to say and think as I please?" If the professor is not aware of this and he/she is made to see his weaknesses very quickly, he,

too, will become defensive. Trying to keep one's objectivity and humanness, while under a perceived attack is difficult for us all.

The students defensiveness is also very high, often so high that their whole ego seems to be on the line. The level of intensity is dependent upon a variety of factors, but the difficulty because of its inter-personal nature may be seen as an encounter, or sensitivity training. When it's seen as this then the professor can be accused in a variety of ways.

If the professor is trying to make the classroom into an arena of emotions, consciously or unconsciously, then students are being abused, and a whole set of ethical issues is raised.

To see this issue for what it is is difficult because of the defensiveness which may arise in terms of colleagues, the professor, students, and the administration, especially if the conflict comes into the open. It's even more difficult because the very purpose of roles in our society is to help us to know what to expect and in changing roles we move into an area of the unknown, which if faced creatively and humanistically can be a very real learning experience for all those involved. If fear and stereotyping overcome then misunderstanding and alienation set in a very detrimental way.

This issue of defensiveness is related directly to the whole teaching milieu discussed earlier. In some environments it may never even arise, and in others may be a very real issue. Whenever roles are changed, whenever expectations are not being met, defensiveness will be a potential

issue, whether it is realized or not. Learning in a sense is the development of new expectations or at the very least a new perspective on old expectations. In this perspective role playing isn't presenting a new issue, simply another way to approach a very old issue.

Conclusion

Seeing both the positive and negative implications of this method, when should it be used? To answer that question we need to return to our beginning statements. It should be used when it meets the needs of the teaching milieu as seen and understood by the individual professor. When used, one needs to be aware of the complexity of the method and make attempts to have thought through the whole role playing process before it is used, specifically integrating the method within the professor's teaching philosophy and goals. When the professor does this he/she will then be more able to select the appropriate simulation for their needs and style. Fransecky and Trojanski[11] (1971) offer very capable advice on the selection: "With a market flooded with games promising to answer every classroom need, you might find yourself lost in the confusion of advertising overload. Although company print-outs sometimes are helpful in assessing a game in the light of your students' needs and abilities, the only real test of its probable classroom success is a careful reading of the instructor's manual and study of the equipment. Sometimes the company will furnish a model game for your consideration.

"Although games vary in complexity, keep in mind that the simulations

can be modified to meet your needs. For example, classes which are too large can often successfully double up players, although this is not always possible nor advisable. A class which does not meet the required number of game players can often group with another class for game play. Livingston and Stoll suggest dividing a large class, 'sending half the students to another room to work on independent projects while the other half plays the game.' Evaluate not only the complexity but likewise the readability of the rules in the light of your students' abilities. Since a simulation game must simplify life situations, discussing certain misconceptions that arise because of the simplification involved may be necessary.

"Finally, be careful that the game does not demand furniture, room size, or any special equipment which is not available to you."

Once a simulation has been selected which meets the needs and requirements of the teaching environment and professor, preparation for the actual simulation can begin. Again Fransecky and Trojanski offer good advice.

Advance Preparation

1. If possible, preplay the game with a few students. Such a trial run helps to realize problems before they arise. A previous user of Consumer, a game we played in a local area high school economics class, had failed to separate the game's play money. Failure to recognize the disorder of the currency prior to actual game time, might have resulted in an initial game breakdown and a consequent loss of the students' interest.

2. Check to insure that there are sufficient materials, forms, record sheets, score cards, pencils, and whatever resource materials are called for and that materials are in order.

3. Abide by the game's recommended number of players whenever possible. Studies indicate that game-overload results in less player interaction, less active participation, and a decrease in game impact because students' interest level is lowered.

4. Vary the ability levels within each team so that competing teams do not demonstrate obvious ability differences.

5. When possible, allow students to choose their own roles and teammates.

Immediate Preparation

1. If possible, have class furniture arranged and game supplies available before the students enter the room. From some of the traffic jams that resulted in the playing of Consumer, we found it good to spread the operations of the game throughout the entire room.

2. Introductions to the game should be brief. State its purpose. Present an overview of its content. Explain its operation. Avoid lengthy introductions and over-explanations which tend to dampen enthusiasm for the activity.

3. If this presentation occurred on a previous day, you might want to review briefly objectives and procedures of the game.

With this advance preparation and consideration by the professor the simulation is able to flow in a positive and effective manner. Not only the needs of the students, the professor, and the whole teaching context are able to be predicted and met, but a tool is provided with a process for growth for all involved.

FOOTNOTES

[1]H. C. Lungren, An Introduction to Social Psychology, 2nd edition (Wiley, New York, 1973).

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Lungren.

[5]Clarice Stoll, "Games Students Play," Media and Methods (October 1970).

[6]S. I. Hawakawa, Language: Key to Human Understanding, Tape.

[7]The Faculty Resource Center, University of Cincinnati.

[8]Samuel Livingston, "How to Design a Simulation Game," The Faculty Resource Center, University of Cincinnati.

[9]Fransecky and Trojanski, "Primer on Games, " Media and Methods (1971).

[10]Carl R. Rogers, Freedom to Learn (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1969).

[11]Fransecky and Trojanski.

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